

REMARKS

Reconsideration of the above-identified application in view of the present amendment is respectfully requested. Claim 1 is amended and claim 15 is canceled. Claim 13 and 14 are allowed.

Claim 1 is amended to delete the word "skeleton" and instead recite that the steering wheel rim and the spoke comprises a structure. This change in claim 1 and the cancellation of claim 15 should now overcome the rejection of claim 1-4, 16, and 17 under 35 U.S.C. 112. Claim 1 is also amended to remove the phrase "in a radial direction" and the phrase "and so that immediate force transmission in a radial direction between said radial inner and radial outer skeleton parts is interrupted". Neither of these phrases is needed for the allowance of claim 1. Claim 1 was not amended to distinguish over the prior art.

Claims 1-4, 16, and 17 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(e) as being anticipated by De Filippo (5,819,596). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Anticipation requires a single prior art reference that discloses each element of the claim. W.L. Gore & Associates v. Garlock, Inc., 220 UPSQ 303, 313 (Fed. Cir. 1983) cert. denied 469 U.S. 851 (1984). For a reference to anticipate a claim, "[t]here must be no difference between the claimed invention and the reference disclosure, as viewed by a person of ordinary skill in the field of the invention." Scripps Clinic & Research Foundation v. Genentech Inc., 18 USPQ2d 1001, 1010 (Fed. Cir. 1991).

De Filippo does not disclose or suggest that the inner and outer parts of the structure are connected to each other by only the vibration-decoupling means and being otherwise completely disconnected. By contrast, De Filippo discloses a metal sleeve 9 that is formed by a one piece sheet metal body. The sleeve has a first tubular branch 11 rigidly connected to a second tubular branch 10 by a double integral bracing wall 12. The first tubular branch 11 is fitted onto portions 13 of the steering wheel rim 14 and the second tubular branch 10 is fitted to a metal wire rod (5 or 6) that extends from the hub of the steering wheel.

Since this sleeve is made of a rigid metal, it cannot be a vibration decoupling means. Vibrations will be transmitted between the rod and rim of the rigid metal material.

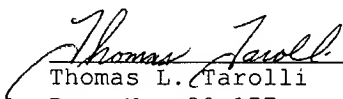
Since claim 1 of the present application claims that the vibration-decoupling means is the only part that connects the inner and outer parts, there is a difference between the claimed invention in claim 1 and the De Filippo reference. Thus, De Filippo fails to anticipate claimed 1. Therefore, claim 1 is allowable. Claims 2-4, 16, and 17, depend from claim 1 and are therefore allowable as depending from an allowable claim and for the specific features recited therein

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that the above-identified application is in condition for allowance, and allowance of the above-identified application is respectfully requested.

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Please charge any deficiency or credit any overpayment in
the fees for this amendment to our Deposit Account
No. 20-0090.

Respectfully submitted,


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